



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

NURSING IN THE CANAL ZONE

By ISABELLE FREELAND

Graduate of the Roosevelt Hospital, Ancon Hospital, Panama

TRAINED female nurses are employed in the Zone only at the Colon Hospital, where the steamers land on the Atlantic side, and at Ancon, across the isthmus, on the Pacific coast. Colon is low, flat, and uninteresting. Ancon is on a hill overlooking the city of Panama. The grounds of the hospital at Ancon are beautiful with tall palms, rubber trees, and flowering plants; roses bloom out of doors all the year round.

The dry season is from January until May. Occasionally there will be a shower, lasting one or two minutes, but generally speaking it does not rain during these four months. The dust is blown around in great clouds by the high winds. During the wet season it sometimes rains for days without stopping, with such force that it seems as if the roofs of the houses would give way and on other days there will be one heavy shower for five or ten minutes during the day. With the utmost care things will get mouldy. Leather goods suffer the most; backs of books peel off if left out very long, but keep very well in a glass case. Pillows and woolen goods smell musty, but these can be frequently put in the sun and warmed through. It is warmest from ten A.M. to three P.M., the mornings and nights being always cool. In the wards and at our quarters it is very comfortable (80°), more like the month of June in New York. In the sun it is often 100°, but a good breeze cools one off, and we never hear of a heat prostration case. All work and business stop between eleven and one.

The nurses go on duty at seven A.M. The hours of duty are from seven to nine in the morning, and from three to nine in the afternoon. Others are on duty from seven A.M. to three P.M. and a few from seven to twelve and from three to six. The night nurses' hours are from nine P.M. to seven A.M. for one month, two or three times a year. Orderlies and attendants assist in the work; the nurses take temperatures, give medicines, superintend the cleaning, do a great deal of clerical work, and occasionally are asked to give an alcohol sponge bath. In the one ward for women, some of the female attendants give baths and douches. These attendants are mostly colored people from Jamaica or Martinique.

At Colon, the wards are two-story wooden buildings, half built over the water. At Ancon, all are one-story high, with the exception of a

few just being built. Two, three, or four wards are placed close together, connected by a covered walk with lavatories and dining-rooms between. These groups of wards are called sections, and are several minutes' walk apart. The grounds are becoming thickly settled with the cottages of the different married doctors and officers. About sixteen nurses, who are on duty near the officers' mess hall, go there for breakfast and dinner, all the others use the nurses' quarters. The meals served are: coffee at six-thirty A.M.; tea, coffee, chocolate, oranges and bananas, eggs, bread and butter, breakfast, eleven-thirty to twelve-thirty, which is a regular lunch; two-thirty to three-thirty, tea and bread and butter; dinner, six to seven. Coffee and crackers are served in the wards to those who wish them at nine A.M. Night nurses have supper at eleven P.M. and tea at three A.M. A large brake brings the nurses to the wards at seven A.M., three P.M. and nine P.M. It is a ten minutes' walk from the hospital gates to the nurses' quarters on top of the hill. The wards and other quarters are scattered throughout the grounds. To give an example of one ward: ward 3, section A, is a surgical ward for colored men; it has twenty-six beds and two private rooms. In this section, four wards are built in a semi-circle around the office of the chief nurse and the main store-room and operating-room. From the other side of the ward which is built high and overlooks the main road, the buildings seem to be up among the top branches of the trees, and almost reach the leaves of the Royal Palm trees. One looks down on the city of Panama, the Pacific ocean, and, at one side, the large Tivoli Hotel. The nurses can see the sun rise out the Pacific ocean and also the moon. There is nothing like the moonlight in the tropics,—such a soft mellow glow, with so many bright stars. There is no twilight; the sun sets, and almost immediately it is dark.

There has not been a case of yellow fever in the hospital for nearly a year; vessels from South American ports are quarantined. Many accidents happen on the railroad and in digging the canal. Malaria and pneumonia are the medical cases, the latter being fatal to white or black men. During the dry season there is very little sickness. Americans are careless and take shower-baths when they come in overheated, after a long walk or from playing base-ball. One game cost the life of one of the doctors and nearly that of the Quarter-master. The colored men lie down in their wet clothes, sometimes on the wet ground, and neglect themselves generally.

The food is nearly all sent from the United States in cans, even the greater part of the milk and cream that are used. There are no fresh vegetables or fruits except oranges and bananas which are grown

on the grounds. Some of the native fruits are nice. Pineapples are delicious, and are plentiful during half the year. Apples are sent from the States, and are mealy and dry, costing ten cents apiece. Before the commission owned its own cows, milk cost from forty to fifty cents a quart. The meats used are beef and mutton, principally mutton. Chicken is served on Sunday, and once in several months roast pork or boiled ham, while rice is served twice a day. Limes are always used instead of lemons.

Nearly half the nurses ride horse-back, either side-saddle or astride, using the latter because the horses are small and some of the roads rough and hilly. There is a monthly launch party every full moon on the Pacific, and on the first Wednesday in the month one regular dance at the nurses' quarters, besides frequent invitations to dances at neighboring places. There is a fine large reception room in the new quarters and also a library, which used to be used before the new quarters were finished. Ten new books are bought every month, making now about three hundred in all. The nurses are allowed to have all the callers they wish, when off duty, until ten-thirty p.m., and on Sunday afternoons, tea is served at four p.m., at Aconcita, the nurses' quarters.

The hospital has five hundred beds, and wards are being built to increase the capacity to eight or twelve hundred. There are now sixty-one nurses, which number will be increased to one hundred when the new wards are finished. It is supposed that then the small hospital will be used for dispensary work only, and all the patients sent to Colon or Ancon, the latter taking the larger share.

The salary is good, the work is not hard, the place is healthy, there is much to see, and good work is appreciated, which makes life attractive. The salary at first is sixty dollars a month and as vacancies occur, nurses are promoted to seventy-five dollars a month, fully half receiving that amount. There is a rumor of a further increase of from twenty to twenty-three dollars for three-year service.

The nurses wear plain white uniforms, no caps, and generally white canvas shoes. They carry an umbrella either for the sun or rain, and seldom wear a hat except to go to church or across the isthmus. The shops are improving; the white goods, embroidery, and laces are very cheap, as are also Japanese goods which are exceedingly pretty. Goods can be sent quickly by mail from the States and cost very little. Simple white dresses are all that are required beside the uniforms.

The Civil Service examinations take place three to four times a year. All necessary information can be had from Mr. Pepperman, in charge of the Panama Employment Bureau, at Washington, D. C.